GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1200
ANSWERED ON:09.02.2017
National Water Framework Bill
Raj Dr. Udit

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce a National Water Framework Bill;
(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and
(c) the time by which it is likely to be introduced in the House?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION

(DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) to (c) Yes, Madam. A Committee constituted by this Ministry on 28.12.2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mihir Shah has suggested draft National water Framework Bill, 2016. The salient features of the draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 are annexed.

The draft Bill has been circulated to all the States/Union Territories and the concerned Central Ministries for obtaining their comments. However, only a few States have responded so far. States such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have agreed with certain amendments to the Bill whereas, States such as Punjab and Tamil Nadu have not agreed to this Bill.

Recently, Secretary of this Ministry vide D.O. letter dated 20.01.2017 has communicated the benefits of National Water Framework Law (NWFL) to the Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs and requested them to support the Bill.

Introduction of the Bill in the Parliament is subject to the concurrence/support of the State Governments/UTs.

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Annexure

(Annexure referred to in reply to Parts (a) to (c) of the Unstarred Question No.1200 to be answered on 09.02.2016 in the Lok Sabha regarding "National Water Framework Bill")

SALIENT FEATURES OF DRAFT NATIONAL WATER FRAMEWORK BILL, 2016
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The draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 seeks to provide an overarching national legal framework based on principles for protection, conservation, regulation and management of water as a vital and stressed natural resource, under which legislation and executive action on water at all levels of governance can take place.

2. The Bill proposes that every individual should have a right to sufficient quantity of safe water for life within easy reach based on the principles of integrated river basin management. The States shall hold water resources as a Common Heritage and Public Trust.

3. The draft Bill proposes that the appropriate government shall strive towards rejuvenating river systems with community participation, ensuring:

(a) 'Aviral Dhara' − continuous flow in time and space including maintenance of connectivity of flow in each river system;
(b) 'Nirmal Dhara' − unpolluted flow so that the quality of river waters is not adversely affected by human activities; and
(c) 'Swachh Kinara' − clean and aesthetic river banks with ecological integrity.

4. It proposes that the appropriate government shall take all measures to protect the ecological integrity necessary to sustain eco-systems dependent on water and should adopt people-centered decentralized water management, for both surface and ground water, including local rainwater harvesting, watershed development and participatory irrigation management, shall be prioritized, while recognizing, encouraging and empowering local initiatives.

5. It proposes that the appropriate Government shall take into consideration the following:

(a) Water Use and Land Use
(b) Appropriate Treatment and Use of Wastewater
(c) Standards for Water Quality and Water Footprints

(d) Water Use Prioritization.

Provided that these uses of water are consistent with the objective of sustaining aquifers and eco-system indispensable to long term sustenance of the resource.

6. The draft Bill lays high priority to Integrated River Basin Development and Management, wherein a river basin, including associated aquifers, shall be considered as the basis hydrological unit for planning, development and management of water. Each State Government shall develop, manage and regulate basins of inter-State rivers through a River Basin Master Plan to be implemented by an appropriate institutional mechanism.

7. It proposes establishment of a River Basin Authority for each inter-State river basin for optimum and sustainable development of the inter-State rivers and river valleys, with active participation and cooperation by all basin States to ensure equitable, sustainable and efficient utilisation of water resources with emphasis on demand management through conjunctive and integrated use of resources. Each River Basin Authority shall prepare a Master Plan for the River Basin.

8. The Bill also proposes that the appropriate Government shall prepare and oversee the implementation of a Water Security Plan for (a) attainment of sufficient quantity of safe water for life and sustainable livelihoods by every person; and (b) ensuring water security even in times of emergencies like droughts and floods.

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